CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

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FINAL RECORD OF THE FIVE HUNDRED AND SEVENTY-FIRST PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Tuesday, 7 August 1990, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. Gheorghe Chirila (Romania)

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The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I declare open the 571st meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

Today, in accordance with its programme of work, the Conference is beginning consideration of agenda item 8, entitled "Comprehensive programme of disarmament". However, under rule 30 of the rules of procedure, a member may, if he wishes, speak on any other subject relevant to the work of the Conference.

On behalf of the Conference and in my personal capacity, I would like to extend a warm welcome to the Secretary-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Italy, His Excellency Ambassador Bruno Bottai. The visit of Ambassador Bottai, an outstanding career diplomat, who, among other things, has exercised the important functions of Diplomatic Adviser to the Prime Minister, reflects the continuing interest that Italy attaches to the work of the Conference, which has already been honoured on several occasions by visits of the Minister for Foreign Affairs, His Excellency Mr. Giulio Andreotti. The Secretary-General's visit takes on particular importance since it is occurring at the time of Italy's assumption of the Presidency of the European Community for the next six months.

I would also like to welcome to the Conference the three People's Deputies of the Supreme Soviet of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, Deputies Eduard Gams, Pyotr Tlantchuk and Sergei Tsypliaev, as well as the member of the United States Congress, Representative Martin Lancaster. Their visit constitutes a great support for our efforts, especially in view of the role they play in the decision-making process on disarmament, including in the Soviet-American context, which has already produced significant results in the field of disarmament.

Also attending our deliberations today are trainees in disarmament. Allow me, on behalf of the Conference and in my personal capacity, to welcome them and wish them success in their work.

I have on my list of speakers for today the representatives of Italy, Belgium, Venezuela, the Federal Republic of Germany and Poland.

I now give the floor to the representative of Italy, His Excellency the Secretary-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Ambassador Bruno Bottai.

Mr. BOTTAI (Italy): Mr. President, it is a particular pleasure and satisfaction to have the opportunity to address this body under the significant and able Presidency of Romania, which is one of the most committed interpreters of difficult but sweeping positive changes in the recent past and with which Italy has excellent relations. I am confident that under your guidance the Conference will be able to face the difficult tasks ahead in the current crucial times of change.

Please allow me also to express my satisfaction for the presence today in this chamber of the parliamentary delegations from the United States and the Soviet Union who are jointly visiting Geneva. It is a further positive sign of the changing times.

(Mr. Bottai, Italy)

It is a privilege and an important opportunity for reflection, to be able to share with you some considerations on the perspectives emerging in the field of disarmament at a time when Italy is engaged in a particularly challenging six-month round of the Presidency of the European Community - a very complex one, aimed at responding adequately to the extraordinary events characterizing Europe in the last few months, as well as to less positive developments such as those of these last few days.

But, let us focus for the moment on our wider expectations. From a general perspective, it will be a matter of giving shape to what is commonly called the "new architecture of Europe", to be established, as far as we are concerned, on the three fundamental pillars represented by the European Community, the Atlantic Alliance and the process of co-operation between the 35 CSCE countries. Such a new architecture is being at the same time sustained by renewed initiatives of co-operation at a subregional level.

A summit at governmental level among Austria, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Hungary and Italy has just taken place at Venice in much the same spirit, to lay the foundations of an increased co-operation between the five countries in many areas of mutual interest.

A new era of unprecedented, promising co-operation between former adversaries is thus taking shape in Europe, more in the reality of facts themselves than in the imaginative capacity of Governments, and marked by the emergence of political and economic structures unbound by dictatorship and inspired by freedom.

With regard to the European Community, two intergovernmental conferences are scheduled to take place in Rome next December with the purpose of initiating two negotiating processes with great bearing on the future economic, political and institutional framework of the Community. The first is aimed at transforming the already scheduled accomplishment of a common market by 1992 into a true economic and monetary union. The second, dealing more specifically with the political integration of The Twelve, points at reviewing decision-making, improving the functioning of institutions and providing for increased unity and cohesion of the international action of The Twelve by reforming the existing mechanisms of political co-operation. These internal EEC developments coincide with the process of change under way in many countries of central and eastern Europe, and with the adoption of new policies in internal and external relations by the Soviet Union, at a pace in keeping with the greatest turning points in history.

I shall restrict myself, Mr. President, to a few brief comments about these changes as currently seen from the Italian perspective. A broad consensus has emerged in this forum about the highly positive character of increased co-operation between the two great Powers for the maintenance of peace and stability, to the benefit of the whole world. The events of the latest hours provide a last example of this encouraging reality. The overturning of the cold-war attitude has found its most concrete and extraordinary expression in the process of unification under way in Germany and in the agreements for the settlement of the external aspects of the German issue.

(Mr. Bottai, Italy)

The Italian Government is persuaded that a unified Germany, under the mark of democracy and in a spirit of full freedom of choice with respect to its future international position, will represent the most legitimate accomplishment of the expectations of its people - expectations considered unrealistic in the past - as well as a fundamental step forward in the consolidation of peace and increased stability in Europe, a continent at last freed of its greatest pending problem.

These great events have already been matched by significant developments in other fields. I would myself like to recall the Declaration adopted at the NATO Summit of 5 and 6 July, which, as I am aware, has already been introduced in this forum in its entirety. I would like to point out, in particular, the determination of its members to promote a transformation in the defensive strategy of the Alliance, in a way more in line with the new realities, including a reduced reliance of security on nuclear weapons. Italy favours changes in the NATO strategy which would further enhance the defensive orientation always attached to it and which would be based on concepts of minimal deterrence and reduced deployment of advanced military forces. Italy is also determined to strive for a broader implementation of the political dimension of NATO as well as for the adoption of a joint declaration by NATO and the Warsaw Treaty countries, designed to register, in a solemn way, the establishment in Europe of a new political climate.

What is currently at stake in Europe reaches far beyond such considerations of a strategic nature. We believe that the coming CSCE summit in Paris and the aim of a more adequate institutionalization of its process of co-operation represents the natural outcome of recent developments, as well as a broader implementation of the objectives laid down by the Helsinki signatories.

Mr. President, we are confronted with the question of how to inject into the multilateral negotiations on disarmament the positive outcome of the favourable East-West trend, since the bilateral and multilateral components of disarmament are in fact somewhat connected to one another. Italy firmly believes that the Conference on Disarmament can contribute more effectively to the preservation of the interests individually represented by each one of us as well as of those of a wider collective nature of our common responsibility. It would seem in effect that a sort of additional responsibility is incumbent upon the 40 countries full members of the only existing negotiating forum on disarmament of a universal nature, the responsibility of being somehow depositaries of such far-reaching expectations beyond this historic chamber. For this reason also we welcome with great satisfaction the growing participation in its activities of a number of countries with the status of observers.

We are confident that the Conference on Disarmament could be entrusted with an increasing role, as an instrument both of amplification of positive developments and of wise adaptation to the specific requirements of universality. An increased negotiating effort in the field of disarmament would therefore seem necessary to us, and only the Conference on Disarmament could undertake such a task through the revision of its own growing role. Otherwise, it might run the risk of being confined to an unfruitful repetition of incompatible approaches.

(Mr. Bottai, Italy)

As to the United Nations, it has given proof in the latest years of being capable of a more effective role in preserving peace in a number of regional conflicts which were heavily weighing on the world.

In a broader sense, the satisfactory or even spectacular results achieved in disarmament at bilateral or regional levels could prove to be insufficient if we were not able to match the duty of building on past experience, thereby delivering to our future generations a world less heavily armed and confrontational.

For this reason, my country considers very positively the fact that the Conference on Disarmament has undertaken a process of revision of its future role in the perspective of the conclusion of the chemical-weapons negotiations. It would seem to us difficult in this respect to refrain, sooner or later, from taking into account any suggestions about the revision of the agenda, especially when the current list will have been fully discussed. I would avail myself of this opportunity to express the wish that the process of revision under way will continue beyond the current session in accordance with the modalities which will be agreed upon as most appropriate.

The primary objective of the Conference will remain the conclusion at the earliest date of the negotiations on a chemical-weapons ban. On this point there seems to be wide agreement among us, although we should be aware that by expecting to foresee in advance all the possible details and scenarios we run the risk of delaying negotiations for a number of years to come.

In Italy, we are convinced that the level of technical sophistication already achieved in the negotiations is more than sufficiently elaborated to allow for the concrete and final expression of political will, when the parties usually find the necessary boldness to come to a conclusion. However, we do not feel disheartened by the insufficiency of results so far achieved in the current advanced stage of negotiations. We have noted the Soviet-American agreements, particularly important for their commitments on the cessation of the production of chemical weapons, probably to be implemented even before the completion of the multilateral negotiations. A certain amount of exploratory activity has also been undertaken in this forum on some of the fundamental elements of the convention, and we are confident that such efforts have not been in vain. It is, however, difficult to ignore that negotiations are at a standstill on almost all the most sensitive issues at stake.

In the field of verification we register differing views on how to strike the appropriate balance between reliability of the system and concerns aimed at protecting, during its implementation, fundamental interests in terms of national security. Whenever ambitious and innovating goals are set forth, it would seem almost inevitable that each one should be ready to pay a certain price. All the more so, if we were to take into account the various experiments carried out by different countries that have produced encouraging results as to the possibility of combining the two concerns. We ourselves had reached those same conclusions in 1988, in the initial inspections carried out at some Italian chemical facilities by experts of international level.

(Mr. Bottai, Italy)

Preserving the effectiveness of the future verification system of the convention is, therefore, of vital importance to all, although in doing so we should not neglect the requirements of specific regional concerns. In a negotiating process aiming at wide-ranging and global objectives, like the one we are conducting, such concerns will have to be taken into account in the appropriate way.

Achieving a universality of accessions to the convention requires therefore an effective and reliable verification system, reassuring for all, but it also needs a convention and an organizational structure likely to promote true participation by all. Participation in the future convention could not therefore merely rely on a political imperative as a result of some indirect form of international lobbying. We therefore still believe that the provisions of the convention dealing with co-operation, assistance and protection should not be neglected, since they can make visible the collective solidarity among the States parties. It would also seem appropriate in our view to set up an Executive Council whose powers and functions would ensure full effectiveness of functioning while providing for a composition sufficiently wide as to offer all States a concrete opportunity, rather than a merely theoretical one, to assume their respective responsibilities on a basis of equality.

The establishment by a number of Governments of a final time-frame or deadline for the negotiations had been envisaged by my country at various junctures, at a political level too, in order to provide for the necessary political drive towards the final stage of the negotiations. We believe, now more than ever before, in such a need. The proposals put forward in recent days about the call for a meeting of the Conference at ministerial level, to be held at the beginning of our next session and designed to provide negotiations with the necessary impetus for the final stage, would indeed meet our full expectations. We are therefore ready to examine any proposal, irrespective of its procedural implications, likely to provide us with a clear scenario for our aims.

Concluding on this point, I would like to stress that the Conference on Disarmament has an enormous achievement at hand. I do not think it would be purely rhetorical to say that a chemical-weapons ban would be an accomplishment without any comparable term of reference in the history of disarmament negotiations. It would represent the first agreement of its kind, one of universal appeal and with far-reaching provisions about international co-operation. We trust that the conclusion of the chemical-weapons ban will inject new dynamism in multilateral disarmament, one which this body will be able to profit from, taking stock of positive as well as negative experiences.

I would now briefly turn to the question of the prevention of an arms race in outer space. It is a subject which Italy has always considered of great importance and which presents us with a problem of interrelationships between its bilateral aspects, as represented by the Soviet-American negotiations, and the growing expectations felt by the international community for involvement in the comprehension of the great events occurring beyond our planet. We acknowledge the reality in the negotiations between the two major "users" of outer space. They could facilitate greater stability and co-operation in the interests of all.

(Mr. Bottai, Italy)

We also consider very valuable all the efforts being made by the Conference on Disarmament that are aimed at strengthening the multilateral dimension as well as the specific ideas that emerge in this context. Any intitiative or proposal aimed at the preservation of stability and the improvement of transparence must be taken into account. I have in mind the proposals about the improvement and standardization of terminology, the strengthening of the current legal régime, the extension of access to data, the improvement of the Convention on the registration of space objects and, more generally, the promotion of confidence-building measures.

During the month of March, the Parliamentary Association of the Western European Union organized in Rome a seminar dedicated to "observation satellites as a European instrument for disarmament verification". Ministers of Defence, representatives of the space industry and a number of experts took part in the initiative, which came to the conclusion that the necessary technical requirements for a viable regional system of verification of disarmament agreements are already available.

We also look with favour on the continuation of participation by national experts in the work of the Ad Hoc Committee seeking to allow greater in-depth knowledge and understanding by Governments of all the implications deriving from indiscriminate exploitation of outer space. We are willing to renew participation by Italian experts in that work.

Let me finally devote a few words to the nuclear items, a subject of considerable sensitivity for Italy's public and political opinion. It is a great pleasure for me to convey my congratulations to the Ambassador of Japan and to all the members of the Conference for the re-establishment of the Ad Hoc Committee on the prohibition of nuclear testing. The resumption of the necessary consensus on such a complex issue, after so many years of unsuccessful attempts, certainly represents a positive development, jointly with other similar developments in the same field.

While the dismantling of the INF is continuing with a view to their subsequent total elimination, the Soviet and American agreements on their respective strategic arsenals should lead before the end of the year, to a first treaty on the reduction of the most destabilizing and offensive nuclear weapons. But what is even more important is that they have established a process aimed at additional negotiations on reductions in strategic arsenals. These achievements, combined with the prospect of the conclusion of CFE I in Vienna and with a new SNF negotiation in Europe are proof that progress in the field of nuclear disarmament has indeed been very significant as a result of the priority legitimately attached to it by a great number of countries. For this reason, too, we are hoping that the coming Review Conference of the Non-Proliferation Treaty will be able to register even greater support for its duration and objectives of non-proliferation.

Italy still believes that a nuclear-test ban is an important objective in disarmament which should be attained through a gradual approach allowing for decreasing testing exercises. Solving problems connected with seismic-verification techniques, with the setting up of an international

(Mr. Bottai, Italy)

data-exchange network and with identification of other reliable systems of detection, requires further study. We trust that these objectives will be reached in a speedier way so as to avoid the repetition of experiences such as the one on the so-called negative security assurances. We hope that the long period of time unproductively spent in the search for a formula meant to combine the divergent strategic concepts of the nuclear-weapon States with the expectations of the non-nuclear-weapon States, not to be attacked or to be threatened by nuclear attack, will be considered in the light of recent international developments as belonging to the pre-history of disarmament.

It is necessary to make sure that the remaining time available to the Ad Hoc Committee on nuclear testing will be used to prepare the ground for its rapid and uncontroversial re-establishment at the next session of the Conference, in order to allow for an expansion of debate on substantial issues on the basis of a realistic programme of work. These developments will certainly be beneficial to the Group of Scientific Experts now working again in Geneva, to whose activity our country also will provide a contribution through our national seismic-verification means.

Mr. President, the events which are now taking place in the Gulf area and which are legitimately giving rise to reactions and serious preoccupations from the international community are unfortunately there to remind us that the establishment of peace and disarmament is a process that cannot rest upon a mere contemplation of the results already achieved, no matter how positive they may be. Peace and disarmament as a consequence, and at the same time a premise, of such an objective must be consolidated and enlarged in a never-ending process, relying on efforts of good will and openness.

Negotiations on disarmament, in particular through the dimension of universality belonging to this forum, are strictly related to the international political situation, at times influencing it or being themselves its consequence.

With respect to the latest events occurring in one of the most delicate areas of the globe - but are there, after all, less delicate areas from the perspective of human suffering? - with respect to those events, we have to recognize first and foremost the importance of a co-ordinated approach by the two super-Powers, in the absence of which we would find ourselves at the edge of a precipice. But we also have to recognize that the road to the establishment of an international order free from the arrogance of force is still long. The Conference on Disarmament is clearly not the guardian of peace in the world but it represents none the less an instrument for its prior establishment and subsequent consolidation. In the search for ways and means more and more adjusted to global and regional realities, Italy believes in the need for such an effort and in the capacity of the Conference on Disarmament to be equal to such a task. We will provide our contribution in an open spirit, eager to consider any other views in order to express above all our concern for disarmament as an essential ingredient for peace.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of Italy, His Excellency the Secretary-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Bruno Bottai, for the statement he has made and the kind

(The President)

words he had for me and for my country. I am sure that members of the Conference have listened with great interest to his statement and have carefully noted the message it contains.

I now give the floor to the representative of Belgium, Ambassador Houllez.

Mr. HOULLEZ (Belgium) (translated from French): Thank you, Mr. President. At the outset, may I, on behalf of the Belgian delegation, convey to you our congratulations on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference for the month of August. We wish you every success in the performance of your duties, particularly during this decisive period for the Conference. May I also thank your predecessors for the first months of the summer half-session, Ambassadors de Rivero and Sujka, for the dedication with which they performed their duties.

Mr. President, I would like to make a statement on behalf of the Western group concerning item 8 (Comprehensive Programme of Disarmament) under our programme of work.

The Conference in its report to the United Nations General Assembly in 1989 decided that the Ad Hoc Committee on item 8 of the agenda would resume work "with a view to resolving the outstanding issues in the near future, when circumstances are more conducive to making progress in this regard".

Accordingly, the Western group believes that the Conference will only need to take a decision on the possible re-establishment of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Comprehensive Programme of Disarmament at the beginning of the 1991 session, in the light of the circumstances prevailing at that time and taking into account the priorities of the Conference on Disarmament.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of Belgium, Ambassador Houllez, for his statement and for the kind words he addressed to the President.

I now give the floor to the representative of Venezuela, Ambassador Arteaga.

Mr. ARTEAGA (Venezuela) (translated from Spanish): Mr. President, on behalf of the delegation of Venezuela I would first like to convey to you our most cordial congratulations on seeing you presiding over the work of the Conference on Disarmament. Your recognized ability, your knowledge of disarmament matters and your enthusiasm ensure the efficacy of your guidance. The people of Venezuela maintains traditional relations of friendship and co-operation with the Romanian people, whom you represent with such distinction. We also wish to congratulate very sincerely Ambassador Sujka, of Poland, on the sound and constructive way in which he directed the Conference on Disarmament last month. We are pleased to place on record our thanks to the distinguished representative of Poland, which is a friend of Venezuela.

(Mr. Arteaga, Venezuela)

Mr. President, in the course of this year in this chamber many statements and observations have been made concerning the significance of the international environment, which in general is opening auspicious prospects. A trend has been emerging towards dialogue and rapprochement, with concrete action between East and West and with expressions of constructive intentions and good will, of readiness, for example, to abandon old concepts of military doctrines that prevailed in the time of the Cold War, of moving on, at last, to new approaches towards peace and co-operation in strategic international relations. Thus, we are witnessing events which obviously awaken interest and which we are following carefully, yes, but without expecting too much.

On the other hand, we are still waiting for this fluid and dynamic international situation to have a direct impact on the work which, for several years, has been under way in this negotiating body. At the same time, we believe that the Conference cannot always remain in the wake of international dynamics or limit itself to the role of receiver of outside impacts. It is time for the Conference to stimulate and strengthen political processes by adopting agreements and measures in its important sphere of action. It is now time for all those efforts and hours of work, all those appeals to common sense to be rewarded by encouraging results in the objectives specifically pursued by this multilateral forum, results which, as we all know, continue to be elusive.

So much so, that amidst the disappointing frustrations and inevitable expectations generated by recent changes in the world scene, thoughts once again emerge, perhaps with more justification than ever, about the future and the relevance of the Conference on Disarmament. Apparently there is a consensus - that magic word - that the Conference can be equal to the demands of this moment of history and utilize the opportunity to move out of its stagnation. The problem is how to advance towards that objective without losing sight of the limitations imposed on us by reality, a reality that some delegations constantly remind us of. In formal and informal discussions, formulas and suggestions of substance and of form have been outlined to propel our work in the right direction.

We are well aware, however, that holding more or less meetings, whether in spring or in summer, will not make us able to cope properly with today's challenges unless there is the necessary political will to negotiate for concrete actions. For the same reason we do not think, for example, that a change in the Conference's agenda can of itself become significant. The items, priorities and desires, however they may be worded, are clearly defined. It is the fundamental issues concerning nuclear weapons, chemical weapons and other weapons of mass destruction that have to be resolved. Among them, we have an unrelinquishable desire to achieve a nuclear test ban. We must try to clear the road before us without taking on responsibilities that will make our work even more difficult and quixotic and may divert us from our central purpose.

In any case, we must persistently stress the reasons and objectives that brought this body into being. The 1990s will be crucial in many ways and will be faced with many dilemmas. Are we going to conform to a world based on nuclear deterrence, with the constant perfection of nuclear weapons?

(Mr. Arteaga, Venezuela)

Mr. President, following the traditional exercise of prolonged procedural negotiations, it proved possible to re-establish the Ad Hoc Committee on agenda item 1, nuclear test ban. Of course, we are aware that it has a limited mandate, but even so we think that the Committee can serve as a catalyst for structuring a deeper and more systematic effort that will make genuine results possible.

The halting of nuclear weapon tests seeks to limit the improvement of nuclear warfare systems, thereby promoting stability and confidence in international relations. Continuation of nuclear testing would have adverse consequences at this new stage of international relations that we all hope will produce many beneficial and lasting developments.

Without such a ban the way will remain open for the emergence of new nuclear weapons, increasing the dangers inherent in vertical and horizontal proliferation. The perfection of new weapons through nuclear tests would hinder the implementation of such concepts as verification, making it more difficult and complex to adopt future disarmament agreements. Furthermore, the credibility of the legal instruments concerning non-proliferation would be even further eroded. These concerns are particularly relevant now, in view of the Fourth Review Conference on the Non-Proliferation Treaty, one of whose main items concerns the nuclear test ban. The delegation of Venezuela wants the NPT to become a universal and effective instrument; we still believe in its possibilities and do not wish it to become increasingly compromised.

There cannot be a gradual, step-by-step approach to a nuclear test ban, because that would not prevent the modernization of nuclear weapons and consequently would not help to stop the qualitative improvement of testing. The aim of a complete ban of nuclear tests must be attained by an all-embracing approach, one of total prohibition. The holding of a conference to amend the 1963 Partial Test Ban Treaty, with the aim of converting that instrument into an agreement for the complete prohibition of nuclear testing, constitutes an element supplementary to the work which the Conference on Disarmament must do to bring about negotiations in this area.

Mr. President, we cannot but express our gratification with regard to the negotiations on strategic arms that have been carried out by the United States and the Soviet Union. We appreciate the results achieved and we hope that in the light of that experience the basis may be laid for working with greater confidence in the future and achieving greater significant reductions. We say this despite the fact that in times of technological change and of doctrinal and political innovations many weapons become obsolete and more sophisticated weapons keep appearing. On that premise, the START negotiations are basically concerned with drastically reducing what the parties do not consider essential for future deterrence.

The modernization of weapons - that endless competition imposed by technology and military research laboratories - includes weapons and weapons systems to be used in outer space. We understand that on this topic the START talks have so far achieved nothing definite.

(Mr. Arteaga, Venezuela)

It is obvious that there is a danger of an arms race beginning in outer space. Hence the importance of the Ad Hoc Committee on this topic, and hence the categorical attitude of the Group of 21 in favour of negotiations on specific measures. Many proposals have been made and these constitute a good working basis.

In our view, the work done by the Ad Hoc Committee in the past five years shows the urgent need for holding negotiations on concrete measures, there being a set of proposals which have to be studied carefully to identify areas of convergence and arrive at agreements on the subject.

Accordingly, the Group of 21 has suggested ways of improving the work of the Committee in examining these proposals, by the creation of sub-groups or contact groups. Our delegation hopes that next year the Committee's work will change course and concentrate on the consideration of those proposals.

Mr. President, one of the main responsibilities of the Conference on Disarmament is the negotiation of a convention on the prohibition of chemical weapons. The Ad Hoc Committee dealing with this item has expended considerable effort on the achievement of that objective, an objective that we hope will be or can be reached above all else as rapidly as possible.

An element that must characterize this instrument is universality. To achieve this, the Convention must fix as its scope total and complete prohibition. It must not entitle States which have chemical weapons to establish certain arsenals or to delay the destruction of all chemical weapons and their production facilities.

In this connection and with regard to the bilateral agreement between the United States and the Soviet Union concerning chemical weapons, we welcome their decision to halt the production of these weapons and to begin their destruction. Nevertheless, as regards the multilateral process of destruction to which all the States parties to the convention would be committed, we cannot accept any premise that provides for the maintenance of certain arsenals till the end of the process of destruction.

Another important aspect in negotiating the convention is the system of verification. This machinery will have to include a procedure that would operate spontaneously for verifying compliance with the obligations established by the convention, and a verification procedure that would operate upon request for determining the truth of any accusation alleging violation of the convention. Furthermore, the verification machinery must be as non-intrusive as possible.

Consequently, we recognize the need for this instrument to include effective provisions for ensuring compliance. The system to be established should be as efficient, simple and, as we have stressed on other occasions, as least costly as possible.

Before concluding this statement, I would like to reiterate our announcement at the beginning of the session that the Government of Venezuela intends to organize a regional seminar, for Latin America and the Caribbean,

(Mr. Arteaga, Venezuela)

on chemical weapons. For reasons of force majeure this seminar has been postponed to the first half of next year. Consultations are now being carried out with the Secretariat of the United Nations on finalization of the details.

The seminar will seek to familiarize all the States of the region with the scope, purposes and objectives of the convention as well as with the verification machinery that will have to be established.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of Venezuela, Ambassador Arteaga, for the statement he has made and the kind and encouraging words he had for me personally and for my country and people.

I now give the floor to the representative of the Federal Republic of Germany, Ambassador von Wagner.

Mr. von WAGNER (Federal Republic of Germany): Mr. President, allow me to take advantage of my first intervention before the Conference on Disarmament, to thank all of you, the Presidents for June and July, and members and observers, for accepting me in your midst with many warm words of welcome and for having made my start - through your help - an easy one. At the same time, I would like to congratulate you, Mr. President, on the assumption of your important post as President for the month of August.

Mr. President, this year's session of the Conference on Disarmament is drawing to a close. It is time to take stock and render account of what we have achieved in the course of this session, in particular with regard to our most urgent task, the elaboration of a universal convention providing for a complete and effective ban on chemical weapons. Reviewing the state of our negotiations on chemical weapons, we are at a historical juncture, particularly promising and favourable for disarmament. This is a time to seize existing opportunities, which in our case means to translate the consensus of the international community - as it manifested itself at the Paris Conference - into a comprehensive and global convention effectively banning chemical weapons.

However, I cannot help but feel disappointed. Despite the untiring efforts and the excellent work of this year's Ad Hoc Committee Chairman, Ambassador Hyltenius, we have failed to resolve some as yet outstanding key issues in our negotiations. Progress has been slow. The pace of our negotiations seems to have slackened compared to last year. Indeed, during the past few weeks, I not only had the impression that we were dragging our feet but that we were also faced with a possible retrogression in our negotiations. This picture is all the more disconcerting as the necessary political and material prerequisites for the timely and successful conclusion of our chemical weapons negotiations exist. History does not repeat its offers.

The state of our work on verification issues and, in particular, the discussions during the summer part of the session on ad hoc verification and challenge inspections have given cause for concern. Challenge inspections are considered to be an indispensable element and a corner-stone of the verification system. It is, as the Minister of State at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office of the United Kingdom, Mr. Waldegrave, recently put it,

(Mr. von Wagner, Federal Republic of Germany)

"the key to effective verification". My delegation therefore has always attached great importance to this issue in our negotiations. We have consistently advocated a rapid solution to this problem. This would not only remove one of the obstacles in the way of completing the verification system, but would also provide a strong stimulus for tackling the other yet unresolved issues of the convention. In spring, the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee, Ambassador Hyltenius, in a bold and commendable effort to bring the discussions on the issue to a successful conclusion - discussions which have been intensively pursued now for more than three years - put forward a new draft of article IX. This proposal by Ambassador Hyltenius underwent two revisions, which resulted in a considerable improvement of the text. Recently, however, new amendments to the text have been presented which could be understood to amount to changing the basic characteristics of the challenge inspection régime. These very characteristics have been discussed over a number of years now and clearly a consensus had seemed to emerge on them. Therefore, it will be our task to ensure that ways are found to come back to this road and find solutions which make it possible for everyone to share this consensus.

I should not dwell at length on the issue of challenge inspections, since our views are well known and my predecessor, Ambassador von Stülpnagel, on 8 March of this year already made a plenary statement devoted in its entirety to this subject. However, in view of recent developments, let me make a few specific additional observations.

Owing to the limited coverage of routine verification and the risks of circumvention, we need an additional verification measure, with the help of which all States parties are able to clarify doubts about the compliance of others. If we were to restrict challenge inspections to what might be called "relevant" facilities, we not only create a definitional problem but also imply an overall reduction in the coverage of challenge inspections that reduces the stringency and effectiveness so far sought by these inspections. We are convinced that because of the peculiar verification problems posed by chemical weapons, each State party should have the right to request a challenge inspection. Only in this way can all States parties be given the necessary assurance of compliance and the verifiability of the convention be assured.

There should be no sites exempted from the challenge inspection régime, if the verification system of a chemical weapons convention is to work. As the experience with our national trial challenge inspections has shown, it is possible to grant access even to very sensitive facilities. We found that "managed access" procedures can sufficiently ensure that sensitive installations and information are protected. Following our experience we would suggest that the concept of "managed access", which has already to some extent been elaborated in the protocol on inspection procedures, be made a focal point of our discussions. In its Working Paper (CD/1012) of 11 July 1990 the United Kingdom presented an analysis of the results of the trial challenge inspections they had nationally conducted at military facilities. We have particularly welcomed this paper because it represents an important input into our negotiations. It should, in particular, stimulate further thinking on the issue of "managed access".

(Mr. von Wagner, Federal Republic of Germany)

Furthermore, I wish to point out that it is on the basis of experience gained from our national trial inspections that we fully support the conclusions drawn in the Working Paper of the United Kingdom.

In this context I would like to introduce Working Paper CD/1026 (CD/CW/WP.315), which is in front of you, on various verification instruments demonstrated during the Workshop in Münster in mid-June, to which all member and observer States of the Conference on Disarmament had been invited.

Some of the instruments and methods described in our Working Paper are already available to inspection teams confronted with the task of verifying compliance effectively in the least intrusive manner. They have proved, under increasingly realistic circumstances, to be extremely useful in the conduct of different types of inspections, whether ad hoc or challenge. Others are being developed under our national research and development programme on verification instrumentation.

Another issue in the field of verification is ad hoc verification. We consider this to be an important element, complementing and strengthening the verification of non-production in article VI. As early as January 1988, we submitted a proposal on ad hoc checks in order to make a constructive contribution to resolving a problem that was raised by a number of delegations: the potential of existing facilities in the chemical industry, in particular those which are not declared under any of the annexes to article VI, to produce chemical weapons. We conceive of ad hoc verification measures to be a non-intrusive instrument of a routine character, its main purpose being to verify the absence of substances listed in the "Annex on chemicals". Such non-intrusive checks would cover those parts of industry which might possibly be misused for the production of chemical weapons. As with other routine verification measures, the selection of facilities to be inspected by ad hoc verification measures would be made on the basis of the declarations to be submitted by all States parties. These declarations would be made in the form of national registers which, in accordance with an agreed format, would list all relevant plant sites of the chemical industry.

We have made a specific and concrete proposal on the establishment of national registers in document CD/984 of 10 April 1990. The reactions we have so far received on our proposal are encouraging and we are convinced that with the broad approach we have adopted - the ability to produce chemical weapons is hard to define unambiguously - we have pointed the way to a manageable and easily implementable solution. We stand ready to continue in-depth discussion on this proposal.

Following the preparatory work that has been undertaken over the last two years, we are somewhat disappointed that it was not possible to make any progress on ad hoc verification this year. The discussion paper (CD/CW/WP.286) of 11 April 1990, which Australia put forward on behalf of the Western Group, provided a good outline of an overall approach to ad hoc verification. This paper was followed by a Working Paper of the United States (CD/CW/WP.300 of 27 June 1990), which proposed draft treaty language. For my Government it is disappointing that the opportunities provided by these papers have not been seized. We would have preferred a drafting exercise that would have helped to clarify the various positions. I know that there are some delegations that in

(Mr. von Wagner, Federal Republic of Germany)

the course of this summer have expressed general reservations as to the need of ad hoc verification measures. We respect that. However, we just cannot ignore a concern that has been expressed by many delegations, namely with regard to the ease with which chemical weapons can be produced clandestinely in existing facilities of the chemical industry. Ad hoc verification measures are to address this concern. And it would only be prudent before any final decision is taken to sufficiently explore this issue. Thus, we hope that the forthcoming inter-sessionals will be used to this end and that a result-oriented approach will be adopted.

Mr. President, it is due to recent developments in our negotiations that I have devoted my statement today to verification issues. This should in no way mean that there are no other issues which require determined actions on our part. Indeed, we are somewhat concerned that such important aspects as article X (assistance), article XI (economic and technological development) have also not been resolved. My delegation recognizes the interest that many delegations place in these two articles and the hope that that interest should sufficiently be taken into account. A solution to these issues is now long overdue. We are convinced that a solution acceptable to all is feasible and we are prepared to work constructively for an early and successful conclusion of our negotiations on those two items.

Without going into detail, and despite the shortcomings mentioned above, I would like to express my appreciation and gratitude for the progress achieved on a wide variety of subjects. We are indebted to Mr. Meerburg for carrying forward the work on many technical issues and, in particular, the solution of the long-standing question of order of destruction. I was also particularly impressed by the imaginative approach that Dr. Krutzsch took on such difficult issues as amendments, settlement of disputes and measures to redress a situation. His efforts were crowned by success and even though it was not possible to arrive at a solution to the latter issue, acceptable for inclusion in appendix I, a solid basis has been laid for further work on it.

Mr. President, this analysis of the current situation in our negotiations shows us that much work remains to be done. We have to face the situation as it is and we have to try to overcome existing difficulties. The international situation and the great progress made in other areas of arms control should stimulate us to work hard and try to resolve the remaining key issues of our negotiations with the necessary urgency and in a constructive spirit. We can thereby prove our seriousness about concluding a multilateral convention and should have a good chance for success in our endeavour.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of the Federal Republic of Germany, Ambassador von Wagner, for the statement he has made and the kind words he addressed to the President.

I now give the floor to the representative of Poland, Minister-Counsellor Towpik.

Mr. TOWPIK (Poland): Mr. President, please accept my sincere congratulations on your assumption of the presidency of this Conference. For my delegation it is a great pleasure to see the representative of traditionally friendly Romania presiding over this body. I wish you all success during this month of August, which is a rather difficult period in our work. I also pledge the full co-operation of my delegation in the fulfilment of your duties.

Mr. President, yesterday marked the forty-fifth anniversary of the tragedy of Hiroshima. Along with all humanity, we pay tribute to the victims who perished in that nuclear explosion. Hiroshima, however, is not only the tragedy of a nation and people; it is also a dramatic proof that at the present stage of the development of the means of warfare, disarmament - and, in particular, nuclear disarmament - has ceased to be a theoretical postulate or an idealistic dream. It has become a necessary element in any search, not only for peace and international security, but also for the very survival of civilization.

We are going through a period of radical change in international relations. This is not merely an improvement in the political climate such as we have witnessed in earlier decades. Rather, this change introduces deep modifications in the very structure of post-war international relations. It alters the whole strategic context in which our debates are taking place and we must ponder seriously on the implications of this change with regard to disarmament negotiations.

Allow me, Mr. President, to dwell for a while on this issue. Despite the expectations held at the end of the Second World War, military alliances substituted for the concept of collective security foreseen in the United Nations Charter. International security was perceived first of all as the issue of the relationship and strategic balance between East and West. Even the policy of non-alignment, as a common element of the security policy of many countries of the Third World, followed from that strategic reality and, in fact, was an expression of adjustment to that reality.

Today, the bloc concept of security is undergoing tremendous change. The division of the world into military alliances, as the main feature of international relations and as the basic element of the security policy of their main actors, is becoming more and more the symbol of the past rather than the reality of the present.

The world's most mighty nations have turned away from their concentration on military strength towards regular and productive dialogue. Their disarmament negotiations have brought unprecedented agreements. New important treaties are in prospect. Military alliances remain, but both their character and their mutual relationship are being deeply transformed - changes which today's important statement by H.E. Ambassador Bruno Bottai stressed with great force. In fact, Cold-War adversaries are seeing more and more fields for co-operation. Their defence planning and military strategy are being adapted to new conditions. Blocs are being considered more as forums of political consultations than as military alliances.

(Mr. Towpik, Poland)

All of this is also being reflected in this forum. The division of Conference members into political and regional groupings is losing its previous significance, for it does not symbolize necessarily conflicting views but, rather, different circles of consultations. In fact, existing divisions must not reflect real differences in approaches to disarmament and international security. Nor is there any justification for attempts to replace the East-West division with the North-South dichotomy. In the field of international security, that is artificial and dangerous. There are, of course, differences in approaches to disarmament and there are different areas of special interests. These differences, however, are not necessarily related to membership or non-membership of military alliances. The Conference has ceased to be a tripartite body. Multilateralism in our negotiations is acquiring a new meaning.

Mr. President, new conditions also demand new thinking about national and international security. It is probably true that in the years to come "mutual deterrence" or "minimal deterrence" will still be considered as an indispensable part of international stability. If we want, however, to look into the future, we must think beyond "deterrence" and conceive another basis of international security.

Under the circumstances which are now emerging, the concept of collective security embodied in the United Nations Charter is becoming more important than ever before in the post-war period. If our intention is to create new guarantees of global security shared by all nations, the present historic transition in international relations must be a transition from bloc security to the effective United Nations system of collective security.

Practical implementation of this system and its efficient functioning could be of extreme value for disarmament efforts. It would help negotiate disarmament treaties; it would contribute to compliance with such treaties; it would create important guarantees of security for States in case of violation of disarmament obligations.

A common attachment to the vision of the United Nations collective security system, reflecting new political and military realities and taking into account the interests of all States, could also give us an important new orientation in our work and help to define new areas of possible agreement.

Mr. President, in the context of these considerations, let me discuss some aspects of item 5 of our agenda.

Our aim is to prevent an arms race from spreading to outer space. Despite positive changes in international relations and intensive discussion at this Conference, we are still far from any agreement. Nevertheless, some possibilities of progress are now seen particularly in two fields:

(a) in the field of confidence-building measures related mainly to greater openness and transparency in outer-space activities; and

(b) in the field of expansion of practical principles for outer-space activities by the establishment of a code of conduct or "rules of the road".

(Mr. Towpik, Poland)

As far as the first domain is concerned, it should be remembered that the concept of transparency and openness has become one of the widely accepted approaches in present arms control and disarmament negotiations. It has been firmly introduced into these negotiations as a means of promoting confidence and mutual understanding.

Let me remind you of the sets of measures already agreed within the framework of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe, negotiations relating to the "open skies" proposal as well as predictability or confidence-building measures discussed in the bilateral American-Soviet outer-space talks. There is also a considerable number of proposals relating to greater openness in outer-space activities which have been submitted to this Conference. They include those which were presented by Poland last August in the Working Paper entitled "Confidence-Building Measures related to Item 5" (CD/941 and CD/OS/WP.38), and which indicate one of the possible approaches to this problem.

Proposals submitted so far suggest not only various degrees of transparency but also different modes of its implementation: on a voluntary or obligatory basis; by amending the 1975 Convention on Registration of Outer Space Objects or by a separate agreement; creating new appropriate bodies, or for example, using the services of the Secretary-General of this Conference.

In the period of radically changing attitudes towards military secrets and in the period of wide acceptance of the importance of transparency in military activities, it would be difficult to find any reason why openness and transparency should not cover outer-space activities as well.

What is more, taking into account the increasing volume of information relating to outer space offered by the United States and the Soviet Union to this Conference, as well as their bilateral discussions on some confidence-building measures, any new multilateral solution in this field would be only a further logical step that responds to the legitimate interests of the world community.

The second category of agreements which seem to meet special interests are arrangements concerning the "rules of the road". The intention here is to avoid accidental destruction or damage of satellites and to remove suspicions as to the intentions of States. Various ideas regarding the specific content of appropriate agreements have been presented and they deserve serious consideration. Such consideration should take into account not only security aspects but also the very fact that outer space is really becoming quite crowded. This year discussion in the Ad Hoc Committee on Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space has introduced a considerable amount of expert knowledge relating to this issue.

There is, however, still another category of measures where possibilities of agreement should be especially actively sought and where progress might have particular value. It is in the field of co-operative measures in the use of outer space, not only for civil but also for certain military purposes. In fact, outer-space activities seem to entail not only a serious risk of a new arms race but also an enormous potential for constructive co-operation.

(Mr. Towpik, Poland)

The use of peaceful space technology has brought about many benefits for mankind and helped to meet important civilian needs, such as in telecommunications, weather forecasting, and earth-resources surveys. More co-operation in this field could offer the advantages of space systems to an increasing number of countries.

What is more important, however, is that substantial possibilities of co-operation also exist in the military field. Satellite remote-sensing technology has created the ability to observe various processes on Earth which are important from the point of view of international security. This technology can and should be put at the service of the United Nations security system. Indeed, the idea of international monitoring agencies or of independent satellite observation systems has been advanced by a number of Governments and in various forms. These include proposals inter alia by France, Canada, the USSR and Sweden. The sphere of competence of such a system could cover the monitoring of arms control arrangements, collecting information and data on sensitive areas as well as supporting United Nations peace-keeping efforts.

It would be of the utmost importance if the two most advanced outer-space Powers, in co-operation with others which expressed their interest, could inform this Conference or the United Nations that they offer the use of their outer-space systems, or some part of them, to the United Nations system of collective security. It would be another leap forward not only in the use of outer space but also in the thinking of mankind about international security.

It could become a key in a new approach to the prevention of an arms race in outer space. Such an arms race can be prevented not only by bans and prohibitions but also by international co-operation, taking into account the security interests of all States.

At the same time, such observation and monitoring arrangements, internationally created and managed, could complement and strengthen the structure of the United Nations collective security system, making its activity more efficient and the international environment more secure.

Mr. President, the main purpose of this statement was to emphasize the need for new thinking in disarmament and security issues. Without new bold ideas and fresh approaches, it would be difficult to solve many of the existing problems in our negotiations. There is a danger that orthodox views on security and traditional approaches to disarmament may impede our work and limit its results despite much more promising conditions at present.

The Cold War impoverished our thinking on international security. It did not allow the implementation in practice of the collective security mechanism provided for in the United Nations Charter. It hampered serious discussion on ambitious plans for the internationalization of atomic energy and ensuring that it would be used for peaceful purposes only (the so-called Baruch Plan). It brought instead the nuclear arms race.

(Mr. Towpik, Poland)

Today when the Cold War seems to be over, it is time to consider all possible options for creating conditions of security. This applies in particular to outer space, which is a relatively new domain of human activity. If we do not find new approaches to this activity, then there is no reason to believe that outer space will be exempt from military competition, with all the possible consequences which we know from recent history.

International co-operation in outer space in the service of the United Nations machinery could not only prevent an arms race there but also become an important contribution to the building of an effective United Nations security system. It might consolidate the authority of the United Nations, which we need more and more.

To conclude, Mr. President, this Conference should not only be a negotiating table for disarmament measures but also a forum of reflection on the organization of international security, of which these measures will be a part.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the distinguished representative of Poland, Minister-Counsellor Towpik, for the statement he has made and for the kind words he addressed to the President, as well as for his remarks on the friendly and traditional relations between the Polish and Romanian peoples.

Allow me to add to today's list of speakers the distinguished representative of the Czech and Slovak Federal Republic, Ambassador Králik.

Mr. KRALIK (Czech and Slovak Federal Republic): Mr. President, thank you for giving me the floor. As the Co-ordinator of the Group of East European and Other States, I would like to state the following.

The Group of East European and Other States attaches importance to the question of the Comprehensive Programme of Disarmament. The Group considers this Programme as an appropriate approach to general disarmament matters.

The Group believes that the Conference on Disarmament should make an important contribution to the success of the Third Disarmament Decade.

Noting document CD/956 of 4 September 1989, which states that "... The Ad Hoc Committee also agreed that it shall resume work with a view to resolving the outstanding issues in the near future, when circumstances are more conducive to making progress in this regard", the Group expresses its view that the Conference should do some additional work and conduct a productive discussion about the concrete future activity of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Comprehensive Programme of Disarmament before its re-establishment.

Mrs. BAUTA SOLES (Cuba) (translated from Spanish): Mr. President, allow me on this occasion to welcome you to your new post of responsibility as President of the Conference on Disarmament. Sir, last week my delegation had occasion to present the position of the Group of 21 on the comprehensive programme of disarmament. Today we listened with great attention and respect to expressions of their positions both by countries of the western group and

(Mrs. Bauta Solés, Cuba)

by countries of eastern Europe, and I have asked for the floor again in this forum to reiterate the position of the Group of 21 on this matter. It is that, in view of the provisions of General Assembly resolution 44/119, the Ad Hoc Committee on the Comprehensive Programme of Disarmament should be re-established when the work of the Conference on Disarmament resumes at its 1991 session. To fail to do this or unnecessarily to delay a decision thereon would be rather surprising. The reasons are various. First, the text of resolution 44/119 A is clear. Secondly, resolution 44/119 A was adopted with no votes against and only one abstention. At this Conference, an arena of international thinking - since the adoption of that resolution and up to today - no delegation that has taken the floor has failed to recognize that there have been positive changes in the international situation and that it is favourable for undertakings in the field of disarmament to accelerate negotiations and to promote confidence. Why then postpone implementation of the provisions of resolution 44/119 A?

In short, Mr. President, I have taken the floor just to repeat once again the position of the Group of 21 on this point.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the distinguished representative of Cuba, Mrs. Bauta Solés, for the statement she has made and for her kind words addressed to the President.

I also see the hand of the distinguished representative of China. You have the floor, Sir.

Mr. HOU Zhitong (China) (translated from Chinese): Thank you, Mr. President. Since this is the first time the Chinese delegation has taken the floor in August, allow me first of all to congratulate you, a distinguished member of the Romanian delegation, on your assumption of the Presidency for the month of August.

This month is a final and most critical one for the Conference on Disarmament. Our work this year has been intense and arduous. The Chinese delegation is convinced that your experience and ability will surely steer the work of Conference for this month smoothly to its conclusion. Our delegation will co-operate constructively with you in the exercise of your duties. The Chinese delegation is very pleased to welcome the Secretary-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Italy, Ambassador Bruno Bottai, as well as the Soviet and United States legislators who are attending our meeting today. The Chinese delegation would like to express its appreciation for the interest shown in the work of the Conference.

Mr. President, we have just listened to statements by various Groups on the question of the comprehensive programme of disarmament (CPD). The Chinese delegation too would like to make some brief remarks on this matter. As I pointed out in my statement of 31 July, the Chinese delegation, like the Group of 21, is of the view that next year the Conference should re-establish the Ad Hoc Committee on the Comprehensive Programme of Disarmament and allow it to go to work. First, the formulation of the CPD is the common desire of the international community. Since 1978, the United Nations General Assembly, the Special Session on Disarmament and the Committee on Disarmament have all adopted relevant resolutions and documents affirming the need for formulating

(Mr. Hou Zhitong, China)

this programme and calling for its earliest preparation. The Conference has been engaged in that task for more than 10 years and has made much progress. Moreover, numerous proposals and views have been put forward by various delegations and countries. Here it should be mentioned in particular that the distinguished former Ambassador of Mexico, Mr. Garcia Robles, made an important contribution in this regard, as has the Group of 21. All this has provided a sound basis for further work on this matter. We should continue our efforts and not quit half way.

Secondly, the CPD is an important and potent element of the international effort in disarmament. It will point to correct approaches and objectives for the progress of disarmament, and elaborate the important principles governing international negotiations for such progress. It will be of great importance for halting the arms race and promoting disarmament and be a safeguard to all of peace and security. The '90s will mark the third United Nations Disarmament Decade. The elaboration of the CPD will contribute significantly to the success of the Decade, and bring into full play the role of the United Nations as well as that of the Conference on Disarmament in the progress of disarmament.

Thirdly, in 1989 all members of the Conference unanimously adopted a report to the forty-fourth session of the General Assembly stating as follows: "... agreed that it shall resume work with a view to resolving the outstanding issues in the near future, when circumstances are more conducive to making progress in this regard". Last year, at its forty-fourth session, the General Assembly adopted, by 154 votes in favour, none against and one abstention, resolution 44/119 A, whereby the General Assembly "calls upon the Conference on Disarmament to consider, at the beginning of its 1991 session, the resumption of the work of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Comprehensive Programme of Disarmament with the aim of resolving the outstanding issues in order to conclude the elaboration of the programme". The Chinese delegation is of the view that the present circumstances are very favourable for the resumption of this task. The Conference should not miss this opportunity and it should implement the relevant resolution of the General Assembly. Mr. President, the Chinese delegation has all along held a positive attitude towards the elaboration of the CPD. We are willing to enter into further co-operation with various parties so that this task will eventually be accomplished.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the distinguished representative of China, Ambassador Hou Zhitong, for his statement and his kind words regarding the President and the delegation of Romania.

Does any other delegation wish to take the floor? It does not seem so.

Allow me now to make some announcements concerning our work, in particular concerning the preparation and adoption of the reports of subsidiary bodies and the final report of the Conference - information which I ask delegations to carefully note.

(The President)

The informal consultations open to all delegations on the substantive paragraphs concerning item 2 will begin today, immediately after adjournment of the plenary meeting, in this room. I would remind you that Working Paper CD/WP.391 was distributed to delegations on 31 July last. These consultations will continue if necessary on Thursday, 9 August.

I would also inform the Conference that, today, the secretariat distributed, under symbol CD/WP.393 the English text of the substantive paragraphs on item 3. The Conference will hold informal consultations open to all delegations on agenda item 3 as from Thursday, 9 August.

I should further remind you that the Conference will hold an informal meeting on Thursday, 9 August, immediately after the plenary meeting, to begin the first reading of the technical part of the report to the General Assembly. The English text of the relevant document, CD/WP.388, was distributed in delegations' pigeon-holes yesterday. The text in the other official languages will be available today.

The Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee on Effective International Arrangements to Assure Non-nuclear-Weapon States against the Use or Threat of Use of Nuclear Weapons, Ambassador Negrotto Cambiaso, will present the Committee's report on Thursday, 9 August, and the text will be available in all official languages on that day. I intend to submit it to the Conference for decision at our next plenary meeting, on Tuesday, 14 August.

I have no other matters on today's agenda and I intend to adjourn the meeting. The next plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament will be held on Thursday, 9 August, at 10 a.m.

The meeting rose at 12 noon.